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THE  
ASSIGNATION  
A  
SENTIMENTAL NOVEL  
VOL. II.

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ASSIGNATION.

A  
SENTIMENTAL NOVEL.  
IN A SERIES OF LETTERS.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

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VOL. II.

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L O N D O N :

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THE

ASSISTION



SENTIMENTAL NOVEL

IN A SERIES OF LETTERS

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. II

LONDON:

Printed by J. G. & J. H. Smith, in the Strand, near the Theatre Royal, in the year 1860.

MILNER.



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T H E

A S S I G N A T I O N .

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History of ISABELLA continued.

*“ Mr. Osney to Isabella.*

“ **W**ILL my lovely Isabella  
“ pardon a deceit which  
“ had its origin in her beauty? Such  
“ charms would justify the blackest  
VOL. II.                      B                      “ crimes.

## 2 THE ASSIGNATION.

“ crimes. Then frown not, my  
“ fair, on the innocent stratagem  
“ which procured us perfect hap-  
“ piness. — I married Lady Mary  
“ purely to oblige the Earl; she  
“ possesses but the empty title of  
“ a wife, while my fortune, heart,  
“ and person are devoted to my  
“ Isabella. Come, my sweet girl,  
“ throw off this peevish virtue,  
“ and own, with me, you have  
“ the better bargain. Settlements  
“ are needless, when all I call my  
“ own is yours; but I inclose you  
“ a deed which intitles you to two  
“ hundred



THE ASSIGNATION. 3

“ hundred pounds per ann. for your  
“ life. — As soon as I can quit  
“ this house of jollity, I shall be  
“ with you. Isabella, as you value  
“ your future happiness, let no  
“ cloud overcast that lovely brow;  
“ still bless your lover with your  
“ smiles, and you shall find him

“ Your ever constant

“ OSNAY.”

“ This insolent epistle roused my  
resentment, and silenced each softer

B 2

impulse.



#### 4 THE ASSIGNATION.

impulse. I went directly to Mrs. M——'s. It is impossible, Madam, to imagine my indignation, while, with the most dauntless effrontery, she unfolded the blackest scene of villany, a sham marriage, and all the hellish arts this practised deluder could invent. She openly avowed that the customer who sent for her was but pretended; that she went to inform my father, and, by enraging a temper already too much exasperated, easily induced him to accompany her, and be himself the witness of

THE ASSIGNATION. 5

of my disobedience. It was she, likewise, who prevailed upon him to bar his doors against an unfortunate and deluded daughter.

“Conscious that apparent stoicism would deprive this malicious woman of the pleasure she promised herself, I endeavoured to appear as indifferent as possible, while she gloried in the successful stratagem.

“I left her, and bent my flattering steps to the peaceful sanctuary of perfect innocence, flattering myself it would afford a

B 3

ready



## 6 THE ASSIGNATION.

ready asylum to a friendless, repentant daughter, and trusting that a father would forgive.—I knocked at the door, but was inexpressibly disappointed to see it opened by a stranger, who told me, that Mr. L—— had left the house some months, and that he believed he was gone abroad, as he ordered all parcels brought there for him to be sent to Portsmouth. This was all he could inform me. Though I had not seen my father since my marriage, and he had returned all my letters unopened,



opened, yet this blow was entirely unexpected. Alas, I was destined a melancholy proof, that what we think the greatest misfortune, may be followed by a still greater; and in the loss of this offended parent, I was a second time deceived. Robbed of the only friend who could screen me from an ill-natured world, or administer a ray of comfort to my bleeding heart, together with the wounding reflection that I had consigned him to sorrow, and embittered every moment of his future life, augmented all my pangs.

## 8 THE ASSIGNATION.

I had no friend, no home, no shelter from the storms of life. Perhaps, Madam, to this excessive cruelty of fortune, I owe a miserable existence. The mind, obliged to exert itself, and conscious it leans not on another for support, collects all its force; or, perhaps, all-pitying heaven, in this trying hour, lent invisible assistance, and enabled me to sustain the most acute afflictions.

“ I returned to Mr. Osney's lodgings, and ordered my faithful Betty to pack up all the things I brought

THE ASSIGNATION. 9

brought from my father's. When she had fulfilled my desire, I paid her what I owed her.

" Ah, Madam, said this unalterable friend, believe not your Betty can forsake you: still suffer her attendance.

" My good girl, I go I know not where; but whatever my situation; your partaking my sufferings will but the more increase them; nor shall you connect your fortunes with the ruined happiness of your afflicted mistress.

" In vain she remonstrated, I



## IO THE ASSIGNATION.

was inexorable; and, embracing with a flood of tears, we parted.

“ Soon after she was gone, I put up all the baubles, once highly valued, as the dear testimonies of a passion I then thought innocent, as it was delightful, and enclosing them with his letters, and all the remaining money I had received from him, sent it to the Earl's by a porter, whom I ordered not to wait, even if commanded. I then left the house, resolving never to enter it, or see this faithless betrayer more. Ordering a hack-

ney

## THE ASSIGNATION. 11

ney coach to follow, with my trunk, I set out in search of a ready-furnished lodging. I went into the first house where I saw a bill on the window, and agreed for a two pair of stairs apartment.

“ Ah, Madam, what a fate was mine, with but one shilling in my pocket, friendless, destitute, forsaken ! I hoped, by selling my cloathes, to support myself till I could get into service.

“ My landlady, a good kind of woman, made it her business

## 12 THE ASSIGNATION.

to enquire; and through her assistance and recommendation, I was received into Lady Beverley's service, to whom she was very well known. Since that time, my life has glided on, though without pleasure, yet exempt from additional anguish, and I wait in calm expectation of that period which will release me at once from life and misery."

Miss



Miss MONTFORT in Continuation.

MY Fanny, were we disposed to moralize, where shall we find a fairer subject? — That we are less miserable, is it not because we are less perfect, that we have not adorned afflictions by sustaining them?

Let those who, exulting in their own goodness, their virtue, or their fortitude, condemn the amiable  
Isabella;

#### 14 THE ASSIGNATION.

Isabella; let them consider how vain the triumph of that goodness which never succoured the distressed; let them glory in that virtue which never stood temptation, or that fortitude never exercised with sufferings.

I have sent you the whole of Isabella's history in one packet, and am certain you will agree with me, that it is infinitely more interesting than it would have been in separate letters.

My Fanny, favour me with your reflections: *I* think of nothing but the faithless Harcourt. But does not  
the

THE ASSIGNATION. 15

the lovely Isabella demonstrate, that what we call fate or chance, is the direction of an all-ruling providence? Of that providence, my friend, foreseeing future misery from the sweet connection, has taught me, through Harcourt's inconstancy, to think no more of him. Ah, Fanny, can your Eliza then ever cease to think of the amiable Edmond?

LET-



16 THE ASSIGNATION.

LETTER XXV.

Edmond Harcourt, Esq; to Lord Charles  
Rainsford.

WHY, faith, "'tis strange, 'tis  
passing strange, 'tis pitiful,  
'tis wonderous pitiful," that I, Ed-  
mond Harcourt, till now the most  
renowned in the world for *bagatelle*  
and *gaieté de cœur*, am over-head  
and ears in a confounded scrape,  
which

THE ASSIGNATION. 17

which even half the whining devils, this and the last age have produced, would have been ashamed of having fallen into. In good truth, though those whining devils would find it no very melancholy affair to have a lovely, amiable, accomplished girl, of fortune superior to their own, declare an attachment to them; or you perhaps, Rainsford, at first sight, may not find any thing in it, to destroy the *gaieté de cœur* I boasted. But marked ye not, I said of *superior fortune*? And know ye not, that I have sworn never to accept -

## 18 THE ASSIGNATION.

cept from a wife, those riches my own inheritance could not give me? There's my pride, my feelings, and my misfortune; but, such is my obstinacy, no power on earth can make me change my resolution.

And yet am I not, in this self-denial, this pride of mine, shewing the absolute inconsistency of human nature? Three months ago, while I believed it impossible to make the slightest impression on Miss Montfort's heart, I was assiduous to excess in my endeavours to gain it. — A letter of hers has now fallen into my  
hands,



THE ASSIGNATION. 19

hands, in which she owns she loves me — and I treat her with indifference:

" I choose the coldest words my heart to hide,

" And cure her sex's weakness thro' it's pride."

The poor girl seems rather unhappy upon the occasion, and hardly knows whether or not to think it honour,

" It comes in such a questionable shape."

But I trust that thirty years hence, fitting with some humble friend in the mansion house of a large estate, just charmed with her son's alliance,

or

## 20 THE ASSIGNATION.

or her daughter's suitors, she will tell the follies of her youth, and own —— Hey, Rainsford, What shall she own? — that “ Brutus was an honourable man.” Ha! ha! ha!

You ask what I laugh at. Why, faith, 'tis more than I can tell you; but finding in myself a strange propensity to yawn, and concluding your ideas must be pretty much in the same situation, I was determined to make an attempt at the *dérangée*; and I have practised it too much, during the whole course of my life, to entertain the least doubt



THE ASSIGNATION. 21

doubt of success. That same derangement, Rainsford, is the very soul of society: who would wish for an existence which should "one even tenor keep?" — Not I, upon my soul. — And of all *orders* of beings, let me *shine* in the *dis-orderly*. There's my *ignis fatuus*, though it must be a devilish dark night indeed which can make it glitter.

Rainsford, didst ever see a set of strolling players, the head of which, determined to outdo all predecessors, struts on as Julius Cæsar — and himself, forgetting  
his



## 22 THE ASSIGNATION.

his razor and his bason, imagines all his hearers do the same? But his companions in toil cannot so easily lose the recollection of what he was — and though deceived himself, and *generally* deceiving those who knew the facetious Dick Johnson, excellent as a barber, and a companion, would ill-relinquish him for the awkward hero. — So I, sometimes, imagine the charming Eliza preferred the “Man of Feeling,” to the “Man of Honour.”

I pass my time, though, very agree-

THE ASSIGNATION. 23

agreeably — very much at my ease too, for a man in love. — Edwards, Williamson, and some other very good sort of fellows, are in town : I traverse the park, and lounge in the coffee-house with them : sometimes escort the ladies to Vauxhall and Marybone : pretty often contrive to meet the Montforts ; then swear it was the luckiest accident in the world ; tease the poor girl a little, not from ill-nature upon my soul, for I doat upon her, but for the dear delight of seeing she still loves me ; in return

for

## 24 THE ASSIGNATION.

for which I let her see that I treat no other woman with more attention.

One would swear, Rainsford, you had fallen in love with me too, that I should thus think myself at liberty to plague you. I am convinced my letter must be extremely diverting, and very much to the purpose: all I can say for it, therefore, is comprized in telling you, it is an epitome of

EDMOND HARCOURT.

L E T.



THE ASSIGNATION. 25

LETTER XXVI.

*Sir George Ashby to Augustus Richmond, Esq;*

YES, Richmond, I have this moment wrote the important letter, which invites my Emilia to my arms, and have unfolded thy too successful plot. Dare not to ridicule the remaining honour that dictated the avowal. Had you been witness to the astonishing alteration

26 THE ASSIGNATION.

in my lovely girl, even thy hardened heart must have relented, and have dried the mistaken tear which flowed for a friend's unkindness. The blush that shamed the rose, her dimpled smiles are vanished, while the sweetest elegance, the most engaging softness, render her doubly attractive. Upon my soul, were it possible to place my Emilia in the situation from which my arts occasioned her removal, to reinstate her in Lady Ashby's favour, I would with transport forego every gratification I promise myself: but Mrs.

Burton

THE ASSIGNATION. 27

Burton informs me, that my mother, finding we set off together, vowed never more to receive her. —

“Receive who?” you cry. — Ah, Augustus, the innocent, the deluded Emilia, while the malicious part of the world, ever ready to satirize the virtue they cannot imitate, condemn the amiable girl. — I am all impatience for her answer. That she loves me I am thoroughly assured: and can the tender Emilia refuse my pressing solicitations, when seconded by her own heart?

How is the lovely cottager, your

C 2

Marian?



28 THE ASSIGNATION.

Marian? Richmond, what if, for once in your life, you act a borrowed part, and shine a man of honour? You say you are convinced her virtue is impregnable: for shame then cease to attempt it. But thou art blest with such a dauntless front, that I question whether even being baffled by a woman (though in thy opinion the most mortifying thing in the world) would discompose it. — However, take my advice, content thyself with the sprightly widow, take compassion upon her, and the other belles of the Castle, who,

by

THE ASSIGNATION. 29

by your own account, (which none  
can doubt) are dying for you. —  
Think no more of Marian, and for  
once be guided by

and GEORGE ASHBY.

C 3 LET-

30 THE ASSIGNATION.

LETTER XXVII.

*Miss Lesley to Miss Winchester.*

AH, my amiable Henrietta, and are you too deceived by the injurious calumny of a malevolent world? — Cruel girl! this is indeed a barbed arrow that has sunk deeper into the soul of your once favoured Emilia than all her other misfortunes: a misfortune too clearly evident



evident to admit a shadow of hope; for had illness prevented your writing, some friend had undertaken the task of comfort, and alleviated the sorrows of an ill-fated girl, alike unknowing real guilt, and imputed crimes.

Why do I take up my pen, since I have no reason to expect you will receive my letters? It is not to intreat forgiveness, or to implore your pity: my heart disdains a pardon it would scorn to merit. And when I am no more, till which these sheets shall not be

32 THE ASSIGNATION.

delivered to you, it is not in my Henrietta to refuse a tear.

Sir George is still brotherly in his assiduities; but I cannot prevail with him to let me leave this sweet retreat, where even the dejection of my countenance cannot cast a gloom, and where the air still blows fresh and chearful, as if it had never borne my sighs.

A letter from Sir George Ashby.—

Ah, my ill-boding heart!

EMILIA

EMILIA in Continuation.

YES, Henrietta, the grief I expected is at length come to pass, and the misfortunes of your Emilia are accomplished. — All-gracious heaven! there needed but this — nay, scarcely needed it — to put a final period to an existence, wretched beyond the power of human nature to support. — Miss Winchester, my heart is broke. —



34 THE ASSIGNATION.

Sir George Ashby has made dishonourable proposals; and his cruelty, though not his passion, shall be gratified. I fall an early victim to the cold hand of death, by *his* hands, for whose sake alone I could wish existence: pleased too in that death, that I save the man I love from a crime which would for ever fix the sharpest stings of remorse in his breast.—Yes, my friend, I have long loved the inimitable Ashby. Unpractised in the deceits of man, my fond imagination pictured his mind lovely  
as

as his person; and thought my heart, though it was all I had to bestow, too poor a tribute to such merit. Fool that I was, not to perceive I gave away all hopes of happiness!

Engaged to Lady Harriet, what had I to expect from Sir George Ashby? — A letter such as he has sent me — and I have nothing to offer in palliation of my weakness, but that I was ignorant of its excess.

In the first emotion Sir George's letter raised in me, I was on the

### 36 THE ASSIGNATION.

point of reproaching him in the bitterest terms my pen could communicate; for he owns it was he who, through the means of Mrs. Burton, infused suspicions of my carrying on an intrigue with him, into the mind of Lady Ashby --- and it was *he* intercepted my tale of sorrow to you. But when I reflected on the balm the confession poured into my soul, that Lady Ashby would one day be undeceived, and that my Henrietta was still faithful, my resentment ceased; but I could not resist the desire I  
felt



THE ASSIGNATION. 37

felt of wounding him to the very  
foul.

I know my existence cannot be  
of many days duration. Already  
the pen seems dropping from my  
trembling hand — Sleep has for-  
faken my weary eye-lids — I  
cannot read, or walk, or eat with  
satisfaction, and I feel within me  
an assurance of a speedy deliver-  
ance from this scene of trouble.  
Still is my resolution of not letting  
this reach you till after my decease,  
the same. The sight of you, was  
you kind enough to fly to my  
assistance,

### 38 THE ASSIGNATION.

assistance, would only make me regret leaving a world which has now no charms to induce my stay.

I have wrote a little billet, by way of answer to Sir George, which, though clothed in terms really expressive of my situation, has a very different appearance.

I said, I was not yet in the state I wished, begged he would not yet think of seeing me. — That when it was out of the power of malevolence and slander to affect me, which would soon  
be

THE ASSIGNATION. 39

be the case, a note from me should inform him, and I should expect him instantly to obey the summons.

The good woman of the house, to whom I have told my story, has acted the part of a mother. Ah, could mine look down, and behold the sorrows of her injured child! — The thought is agony — I will hope she cannot.

The farmer and his son, have not for some time seen me. To my friendly hostess, therefore, I have given my orders, which I am perfectly



40 THE ASSIGNATION.

fectly satisfied she will obey. —

I have desired to be buried at the foot of a favourite tree, near the ruin I have described to you. A plain urn is to be my monument, with the initials of my name, and the following text :

“ Boast not thyself of to-morrow,  
“ for thou knowest not what a day  
“ may bring forth.”

Adieu, my Henrietta ; may you have many friends, and may they all love you as sincerely as your Emilia has done ; but may  
the

## THE ASSIGNATION. 41

the tale of her misfortunes be all  
they will ever feel of them; may  
the reality be buried with

EMILIA LESLEY.

LET-

42 THE ASSIGNATION.

LETTER XXVIII.

*Mr. Willmott to Miss Lucy Montfort.*

**A**FTER so long an absence, will Miss Montfort still own her once loved Willmott? Has she not rather yielded to a more amiable, a wealthier victor, and forgot the honest courtship of the heart, in elegance, in pomp, and pleasure?

Your



THE ASSIGNATION. 43

Your sister, I hope, is as well and as sprightly as ever. Your friend, Charlotte Watson, likewise, is she still my advocate? And is my charming Lucy as lively and as tender as in those delightful hours of happiness we lately knew? Say, my love, are the shades of Montfort-Hall still beautiful as when every tree afforded a shelter for innocence and truth?

You desired an account of Bengal: would it were in my power to obey you, but your Willmet was never a nice observer.

Calcutta

#### 44 THE ASSIGNATION.

Calcutta is a very populous place, and in that part of it inhabited by the natives, the houses are much crowded. Our Europeans, indeed, live more agreeably, and are careful to build in the most airy situations. The soil is fruitful, and the cultivated part, inclosed for rice grounds, makes a very pretty appearance. The more desert part of India, is much covered with small shrubs, which lead me to imagine the soil capable of affording many valuable products, if it were properly managed—  
but

THE ASSIGNATION. 45

but I am in expectation of being soon sent up the country, when I shall be able to give you a clearer idea of this part of the world.

We live here much at our ease, take exercise in our verrandos, and have palanquins at command; and I am so well convinced that it is impossible, after spending much time in Calcutta, to be happy in England, that I am not ambitious of returning.

I have been unfortunate, my sweet friend, in all my undertakings. How, indeed, could I  
be



## 46 THE ASSIGNATION.

be otherwise, when my luckiest planet had withdrawn its cheering influence?

By the treachery of a trusted friend, I was deprived of the wealth I had amassed with the most careful diligence, cheated of that which I doubted not would prove my highest happiness, as I flattered myself the treasure would be sweetened by my Lucy's participation.

Mrs. Winter, a widow of excellent fortune, blest with great sweetness of temper, and in all  
the

THE ASSIGNATION. 47

the bloom of beauty, with humanity peculiar to herself, relieved my woes. O, Miss Montfort, were it not for her assistance, your Willmott had indeed been miserable. ——— A thousand little inadvertencies declare she does not hate him, declare her heart is his, her hand and fortune at his disposal— but still I hope to be happy in my Lucy's society. O, Madam, do not hate the man who, to maintain his constancy for Miss Montfort, sacrifices youth, beauty, and fortune.

I find,

## 48 THE ASSIGNATION.

I find, from my father's letters, that it is reported I am going to be married. Perhaps my sweet Lucy is miserable through the groundless report : but I do not believe it. Were it even possible for the Lady to whom I am given to be more amiable, more lovely than her who first received my vows, I should blush to have it said Harry Willmott was inconstant. —

Convinced of this, you have no longer cause to be uneasy. I can suffer, but I will never forfeit my word : the hand I once offered

Miss



THE ASSIGNATION. 49

Miss Montfort is still at her disposal.

It is a charming evening, and Mrs. Winter desires I will accompany her in a walk. — You see, my dear Lucy, we live perfectly *a l'Angloise*. This the more temperate part of the year is absolutely delightful ; and there needs but yours, and the company of a few more female friends, to render it a perfect *paradis terrestre*. We dance, we pay and receive the most sociable visits, laugh incessantly, and have even our theatrical amusements. Your

50 THE ASSIGNATION.

Henry flourishes a perfect Theodosius, while the lovely widow shines in all the softer beauties of his Athanasius. But she appears near the window in her walking dress, and looks a fairer Helen.

Adieu, my dear Lucy, remember me to our old acquaintance; particularly to your sister. — My sweet friend, sometimes recollect your

HENRY WILLMOTT.

LET-

THE ASSIGNATION. 51

LETTER XXIX.

Sir George Asbby to Augustus Richmond, Esq;

**I** triumphe! — Give me thy  
hand, thou perfect Machiavel!  
thou divine projector! Faith, Rich-  
mond, thy friend is wild with joy —  
Such a note from Emilia! — But it  
were sacrilege to transcribe the  
dear contents. I write to thee  
while the phaeton is preparing,



52 THE ASSIGNATION.

that I may fly to the expecting charmer on the wings of rapture.

Though you may perhaps wonder how a phaeton and the wings of rapture are coupled; yet, let me tell thee, Augustus, for a man in transports, this epistle seems mighty reasonable, and ought, doubtless, to be treasured in the sacred deposit of friendship.

That you may have no cause to accuse me of ingratitude, I will give you the contents of my angel's billet, and in transcribing it, snatch  
a thou-

THE ASSIGNATION. 53

a thousand kisses from the lovely characters.

*Miss Lesley to Sir George Ashby.*

"*Emilia dies for you.*"

The phaeton comes; I shall not seal this letter till my return. — Augustus, thy friend is the very happiest of human beings!

54 THE ASSIGNATION.

*Sir George Ashby in Continuation.*

THE happiest of human beings  
did I say? — Ah, Richmond, no  
pangs can match the daggers thou  
hast planted in this heart!

Talk not to me of pleasure, or  
of friendship, I renounce them  
both — but chief thy correspond-  
ence, thou plotting fiend, who  
like the traiterous viper, hast stung  
the breast that nourished thee.

See



THE ASSIGNATION. 55

See there she lies, all pale ! Yet  
still the tender smile beams on her  
lovely countenance, as if ambitious  
to accompany the sweet Emilia to  
the cold regions of the grave, and  
gild its horrors. — Ah, go, ye  
lovely, ye delusive fugitives, ye are  
useless here; for when she died,  
all pleasure died with her, and ye  
but mock misfortune.

Fondly dreaming of future joys,  
and roving through the fields of  
fancy, I arrived at Osnay Dale. —  
The flowers put on their sweetest  
tints, the birds greeted the enrap-

56 THE ASSIGNATION.

tured Ashby with their most melodious warblings, while all nature seemed to share his transports.

I flew to my Emilia's apartment to breathe the sincerest vows of love, and clasp the consenting beauty to my heart. — Ah, Richmond, even imagination cannot paint the horrors that presented themselves before me. — Emilia, the once blooming Emilia, pale, wan, yet lovely still — too true a prophets! — died indeed for me! Foolish, not clearly to perceive her meaning, or dream her angel  
purity

THE ASSIGNATION. 57

purity ever meant to bless my guilty passion! — She lay (her lovely form, the sweetest emblem of her fairer mind) she lay — Ah, Richmond! — in her coffin! — The freshest roses covered her shroud, and blushed to bloom when she was dead.

It was too much to support. — Horror, anguish and despair robbed me, for a time, of life; and I recovered but to execrate Augustus Richmond. Are these thy boasted plots? this thy method of procuring happiness? and is it thus thy friends

D 5                      acknow-



58 THE ASSIGNATION.

acknowledge thy assistance, thou cool  
deceitful villain? — But you claim  
the merit of your plot — your suc-  
cessful plot. — Thou hast, indeed,  
a head admirably turned for schem-  
ing, witness my poor Emilia; but  
you can never feel for the misery  
you have occasioned, till you have  
seen her, have beheld that lovely  
blossom, nipped like the morning  
flower. — Ah, death, when  
couldst thou boast so fair a cap-  
tive? Appear but as Emilia, and  
even the most happy will court thy  
hand.

How

THE ASSIGNATION. 59

How delightful the days I have spent at my angel's sweet retreat; how soft, how elegant her converse; how animated every scene! — My God! and who could think the flowery path led but to despair?

When pleasure would attract, or passion subdue, I can propose a never-failing antidote. Think you behold the lovely Lesley on the bed of death, and hear her last sigh accuse her Ashby.

But why did I arraign thy conduct; why condemn my friend? —

## 60 THE ASSIGNATION.

Richmond but shewed the dagger  
—— 'twas Ashby pointed it to his  
Emilia's breast. —— You never saw  
the lovely victim; and I only am  
to blame, who knowing the sweetly-  
noble Lesley, knew not, that she  
preferred death, even to the shadow  
of guilt — and yet, Augustus ——  
But who can blame the Indian, who  
ignorant of heaven, courts not its  
joys? — Oh, come, administer com-  
fort to thy wounded friend! — But  
my Emilia is dead — and

“What face remains alive that's worth the viewing?”

“Whose tongue is music now?”

Ah,



## THE ASSIGNATION. 61

Ah, Richmond, stop — and if it is possible for thee to moralize, reflect one minute on thy Ashby — see him miserable, though blest by fortune to profuseness — while Emilia Lesley, richer in inborn greatness, in death has taught us

“ Not with the purple colouring of success

“ Is Virtue best adorned.”

Augustus, if I have too much complained of thee, let us exchange reciprocal forgiveness. What was the famed Lucretia, to our chaster heroine? — Her virtue languishes, if set in competition with Emilia's,  
and

62 THE ASSIGNATION.

and yields the palm to her who knew to conquer the tender inclinations of her softened heart.

Richmond, you knew not my murdered love, and thought no woman chaste, but the untempted. — But I cease to complain of thee, since every accusation returns to my own breast with sharpened stings.

Pardon this wildly-inconsistent letter. Can the dark murderer compose his style? Or can you hope that he who has destroyed the loveliest work of heaven, should  
send

send you a sheet less incoherent than  
his mind? — My friend, will you  
not blush to acknowledge the cha-  
racters of your

ASHBY?

LET-



64 THE ASSIGNATION.

LETTER XXX.

*Augustus Richmond, Esq; to Captain Bevill.*

DEAD! Why, this it is to  
have to have to do with  
your sentimental Misses. Could  
you, Bevill, have conceived it possi-  
ble the girl should have taken it  
so much to heart? — Upon my  
soul

THE ASSIGNATION. 65

soul I am sorry for it; but I only  
meant to make her happy—

And faith whose afraid? — Let it

be said, that I was the cause of  
her death: with all my heart. The

girl was a good girl, and you  
know,

I told him —

“ If there’s a power above us,

( “ And that there is all nature cries aloud

“ Through all her works) he must delight in

“ virtue,

“ And that which he delights in must be happy.”

Moralizing, by Jove! — But I was

glad

66 THE ASSASSINATION.

glad to slip my neck out of the collar, even at the expence of a little gravity. — What I write to you for, Bevil, is to desire you will immediately take post for Ashby's residence, and do all you can to comfort him. — Tell him that I am ashamed to see him — that I know not how to write to him — and that I really am more unhappy upon the occasion than the injured spirit of his Emilia could wish me.

belg

The



THE ASSIGNATION. 87

Will The fools here (the women  
I mean) have found out that  
something distresses me, and are  
so very kind — upon my soul I  
hate them. — I shall get out of  
their way as fast as I can — go  
to France, I believe, — to the  
devil — any where — for that I  
should longer tread this same dull  
round of tea, impertinence and cards,  
is impossible.

Write to me, Bevill, tell me  
your success in the friendly office  
of consolation. Direct your letters  
here

## 68 THE ASSASSINATION.

here — or where you will  
— they cannot fail of reach-  
ing your

**AUGUSTUS RICHMOND,**

**LET-**

LETTER XXXI.

Miss Lucy Montfort, to Miss Charlotte

Watson.

MY Charlotte, the report is true; the faithless Willmott "has found a richer maiden." Could you have believed this affectionate lover appeared amiable but to deceive; and won my heart that he might break it?

My



# 700 THE ASSIGNATION.

My sister enclosed Mr. Willmott's letter for your perusal. I blush to own that, for some days after I received it, I was incapable of writing. But my resentment, my slighted love. (Charlotte, where shall I find a name to express my feelings?) obliged me to answer that epistle which caused me so much pain. Take then the copy of it.

Miss

THE ASSIGNATION. 747

Miss *Lucy Montfort* to Mr. *Willmott*,

“A three years silence almost  
“convinced me Mr. Willmott was  
“too much a man of the world  
“to “sacrifice youth, beauty, and  
“fortune,” “to maintain an old-  
“fashioned constancy; but, won-  
“dering at his exalted generosity,  
“I retract my mistaken opinion.  
“— You are really commenda-  
“ble, Sir; and the “sacrifice,” so  
“very uncommon, that I would  
“by

72 THE ASSIGNATION.

“ by no means detract from your  
“ merit; a merit of which I con-  
“ fess myself as sensible, as even  
“ you could wish me. But the  
“ same sense that dictated this  
“ heroic conduct might have like-  
“ wise informed Mr. Willmott that  
“ the woman with whom love,  
“ only, made him equal, will easily  
“ regain her superiority, and, by a  
“ glorious effort, resign this East-  
“ India phoenix, to “ a widow of  
“ excellent fortune, and in all the  
“ bloom of beauty.” “ When I  
“ declare you free, Sir, the only  
“ emotion



THE ASSIGNATION. 73

“emotion I feel is that of shame:  
“I blush ever to have been con-  
“nected with a man I so heartily  
“despise.”

Charlotte, could he read this heart! Ah, how different from the deceitful paper! ——— Should I not rather have said,

“MY Willmott, I see the strug-  
“gle between your love and ho-  
“nour; and though you are incon-  
“ceivably dear to your affectionate  
“Lucy, she knows to conquer the

VOL. II.

E

“ten-

74 THE ASSIGNATION.

“ tenderest attachment, when in  
“ competition with your interest —  
“ nor is it so hard a task ; she  
“ must be blessed, while you are  
“ happy.”

Sure this were better — for it is  
more sincere.

My friend, give yourself the trouble once more to peruse his letter. Does he not make a merit of his constancy? — “ You have no cause  
“ to be uneasy. — I can suffer,  
“ but will never forfeit my word.

“ He

THE ASSIGNATION. 75

“He would be ashamed to have it  
“said he changed.”

“And fall these sayings from that gentle tongue  
“Where civil speech and soft persuasion hung?”

But I have no reason to re-  
proach him. — Mrs. Winter’s  
charms — the prospect of superior  
fortune — her flattering partiality —  
and still (indeed Willmott thou  
hast cause to boast) my Henry’s  
heart retains the flame it first re-  
ceived — the object is but al-  
tered. — And this, Charlotte,  
if our grand-mammas say true, is



76 THE ASSIGNATION.

the invariable conduct of the sex. Falshood appears their criterion of perfection; and who shall longer say — no man is perfect?

Since I wrote to Mr. Willmott, Lord Charles Rainsford solicits my affection. — My friend, to love, and be deceived, are synonymous — and is the deception then so sweet as to be again embraced by your

LUCY MONTFORT?

LET-

THE ASSIGNATION. 77

LETTER XXXII.

Captain Bevill to *Augustus Richmond*, Esq;

**C**OULD a letter, bearing the signature of *Augustus Richmond*, be received with regret, it was your last. I set off immediately to console the penitent *Sir George*.——

78 THE ASSIGNATION.

The good people of the farmhouse, where he lodged, directed me to Osney Dale, where it seems he passes the greatest part of his time.

Richmond, you can have no idea of the alteration a few days have made in him.

I found him in a walk, which, I am told, his loved Emilia used to frequent.

He seemed pleased to see me, and pressing my hand to his heart, "My Bevill, how kind  
" this friendly visit! ——— But I  
" will



THE ASSIGNATION. 79

“ will nobly overpay your trouble.”

Saying this, he turned towards the house, and conducted me to Emilia's apartment.

Ah, Richmond, even a stoic must have wept the woes which there appeared before me.

He led me to the coffin, then taking his Emilia's hand; “Bevill,” said he, “it was *I* who played the dark assassin, and directed the fatal stroke.”

He could no longer contain himself; and waving his hand, as

80 THE ASSIGNATION.

if wishing me to depart, I left the room.

I did not see him for some time after. — He at last approached me, his eyes red with weeping.

“Ah, my friend,” said he, “can you excuse me? — But I am convinced: to Captain Bevil there needs no apology for my weakness.”

I assured him of my concern for him, and how much I was interested in his misfortune. — He begged me to make Lady Ashby acquainted

THE ASSIGNATION. 81

acquainted with his sorrows, and to do justice to his Emilia.

In compliance with his desire, I took post for London, and found her ladyship at home.

She was inexpressibly affected with the recital, sometimes accused Sir George, but, more frequently, condemned herself for leaving the sweet Miss Lesley friendless and destitute.

Mrs. Burton was dismissed with ighominy. Her ladyship intreated me to return to Osnay Dale, and



## 82 THE ASSIGNATION.

endeavour to calm her Ashby's troubled mind.

Before we parted, we agreed that I should, if possible, prevail on him to take a little tour, to dissipate his melancholy.

On my return, I found Sir George still at Osney Dale, and it was with the greatest difficulty I could persuade him to accompany me to the farm-house.

The next morning, intending to pay his daily visit to his lovely Emilia, he entered the chamber,  
but

## THE ASSIGNATION. 83

but the corpse was gone. The good woman, fearing it would too much affect him were he present, had interred it, according to Miss Lesley's orders, near a favourite ruin.

He flew to the grave, lamented that he should no longer behold the only object he wished to see, and decked the urn with the most blooming flowers.

He has promised to accompany me to Italy, but wishes me to defer my journey for a few days. I assure him my business is so ur-

### 34 THE ASSIGNATION.

gent that I might be a loser by the least delay, and he thinks too much of Emilia to question my veracity.

I shall write to you as soon as we leave this place, and flatter myself I shall have it in my power to inform you, Sir George Ashby regains his chearfulness. That he may, is the sincere wish of your

FREDERICK BEVILL.

LET-



LETTER XXXIII.

*Edmond Harcourt, Esq; to Lord Charles  
Rainsford.*

**H**UZZA! Rainsford! Here's  
transport for you, my boy!  
— Not the sober refinements of  
delicate sensibility, with all the  
long et-cetera of fine-spun sensa-  
tions, but real and substantial hap-  
piness: such as none but thy mad  
friend

## 86 THE ASSIGNATION.

friend can feel; for none, before, was ever blessed like him. But if I could descend a little from these altitudes, and recount these amazing changes, I presume it would be more acceptable to a fellow of your gravity.

You know then the little expectation my uncle's marriage left me of his fortune; but the faithless Caroline, as if willing, by her crimes, to occasion me that felicity her virtue had not been great enough to accomplish, dis- obliged the old gentleman so much  
by

THE ASSIGNATION. 87

by a *faux-pas*, that he has left her nothing, and his estate entirely to me. — Behold me then possessed of three thousand a year, and doubt whether I have thrown myself at my Eliza's feet. — Yes, Rainsford, I flew to Lady Beverley's; and, having the good fortune to find Miss Montfort alone, poured out my whole soul before her. — But guess my confidence in her affection, when I did not, till her lips had ratified the dear confession — of her love, declare to her my increase  
of



## 88 THE ASSIGNATION.

of riches. It seemed, I thought, rather to mortify her; and she was evidently charmed that, by my not disclosing it before, it had given her an opportunity of evincing the sincerity of her affection.

— Dear girl! my whole life, devoted to a return of thy goodness, would be insufficient to accomplish it. — Lady Beverley is so obliging as to appear much pleased with the alliance, and a few days will compleat my happiness. — Do, my Lord, quit those groves and rivulets which,

I am

THE ASSIGNATION. 89

I am sure, must have grown weary of your sighs; I come and be a witness of my joys: your heart is too good not to bear a part in them. — Lucy Montfort enquires for you; can you refuse to come and lessen her sorrows, if you are deaf to the entreaty of heightening my enjoyments?

As for Caroline, I should be sorry if the remembrance of the faithless mistress should destroy the respect due to the widow of him to whom I owe my fortune, and,

## 90 THE ASSIGNATION.

and, what is infinitely dearer to me, my Eliza. I have, therefore, insisted on her accepting five hundred a year, and a pretty little house enough in the town of D—, which fell to me by my uncle's death. She professes gratitude; but it is a virtue, and as such, never could find entrance in her breast. I am, &c.

Adieu, Rainsford; suffer me to entreat you to be present at my nuptials, and accompany me to my seat, where I shall go immediately



## THE ASSIGNATION. 91

mediately after that ceremony which  
is to give the most amiable of her  
sex to her

EDMOND HARCOURT.

92 THE ASSIGNATION.

LETTER XXXIV.

Lady Harriet Somner to Miss Lennox.

WELL, Maria, the Marquis  
is at length arrived. He  
is perpetually here, and has found  
the method to make the com-  
pany of the most agreeable man  
in the world unpleasing. — My  
friend, he talks to me of love —  
Ah,

THE ASSIGNATION. 93

Ah, how I hate the subject! —

Who can appear eloquent after Sir George Ashby, or touch the heart *he* knew to charm? —

My brother too is warm in his friend's commendation: and if the utmost elegance of person and conversation can deserve his praises, they are well bestowed. —

The amiable Sir George has left England, and left it even without seeing Lady Ashby. — He was too much dejected to see the mother he had offended; and could not revisit those scenes  
where



94 THE ASSIGNATION.

where he first became acquainted with his Emilia, without emotion.

Maria, how unjust your Harriet, when she accused Miss Lesley! — I have wept Sir George Ashby's inconstancy — but the innocent Emilia fell a martyr to his love. — Captain Bevill, urged by her ladyship's intreaties, and his own friendship, accompanies the mourning Ashby.

Can you excuse so much of this subject? My pen, lest it caught the infection from its mistress, dwell

dwells with pleasure on his name.  
 — Let not this teach me to hate the  
 dear encroacher, place every error  
 in the strongest view, but take care,  
 my friend, one virtue does not veil  
 them all.

Still this Marquis. — Indeed I  
 will not see him. — What can he  
 want with me? — My Ashby taught  
 me that men are cruel and incon-  
 stant: and once convinced,

“That, in love’s ritual, we shall never find,

“Vows made to last, or promises to bind.”

this heart can never again admit the  
 insinuating passion.

And

And when is my dear Maria! to commence wife? When will she reward her deserving William?

You say, "you did not dare  
" sooner to confess your attachment,  
" lest I should ridicule my love-sick  
" friend."

My amiable girl, how little you know your Harriet! — How long has it been her failing to ridicule the artless feelings of a tender heart? Believe me, I never could — I pity the female enthusiast, but laugh at love in man. — Your country swains are perhaps sufficiently old-fashioned



THE ASSIGNATION. 97

fashioned to patronize the forgotten deity, or my Maria's eyes may re-establish his power. — I shall expect to be informed when the happy day is fixed. That it may prove a pleasing prelude to everlasting felicity, sincerely prays your

HARRIET SOMNER.

VOL. II.

F

LET-

98 THE ASSIGNATION.

LETTER XXXV.

*Edmond Harcourt, Esq; to Lord Charles  
Rainsford.*

**S**TILL, Rainsford, in expectation of the happy morn, how provoking these lawyers! Not all my entreaties can rouse their stupidity; and they settle the deeds with as much caution and composure as if I were going to marry  
my

THE ASSIGNATION. 99

my grandmother. Eliza laughs at my impetuosity, and I dare not hint a suspicion that she too regrets the delay. — The ladies, however, are solicitous to amuse me (good souls!) while I receive all their assiduities with the *hauteur* and majesty of the grand Signior. — These necessary delays, Rainsford, give a man infinite importance. Then I lay all the blame upon Eliza. “What occasion for writings? my whole estate is yours.” I then throw her a *carte blanche* — pretend to be exceedingly out of humour —



100 THE ASSIGNATION.

swear at the scoundrels — while the poor girl says the kindest things to dispel my chagrin — it vanishes in a moment, and I press the attractive charmer to my heart.

Though this assumed pettishness may to you appear the most errant folly; yet, let me tell thee, it is a source of inconceivable pleasure to thy friend. There would be no supporting the delay without it. — However, Charles, I will endeavour to atone the former part of this letter, by relating the prettiest adventure — quite in your own stile too,

too, your shades, your brooks,  
your flower-enamelled meads.

Know then that, on Tuesday  
last, Lady Beverley and Lucy  
Montfort left Brook Street, and  
in a chaise and four set off for  
Lady Beverley's seat at Beaufort-  
Hall, followed by your Edmond  
and his Eliza. The journey was  
delightful. Could it be otherwise,  
in *tête à tête* with the loveliest  
woman in the world?

About ten miles from Beaufort  
Hall, the wheel of our chaise  
flew off. My Eliza was alarmed,

and the postillion, fortunately discovering a small thatched cottage, within a few yards of us, I supported her thither in my arms.

We found the good man and his wife, like Baucis and Philemon, happy in each other, and surveying, with pleased attention, the infant amusements of two blooming children. The honest pair gave us the warm welcome of social hospitality, and, recommending my lovely charge to their care, I returned to look after  
the



the chaise. The servants assured me it could not be well repaired, and that if we ventured further in it, we were liable to more dangerous accidents.

You may easily imagine how disagreeable this delay, but it was unavoidable, and I was obliged to send to the next town (about five miles distant) for a fresh equipage.

At my return to the cottage, I found my Eliza with a smiling cherub on either knee, listening

to their innocent prattle, while the woman of the house was busily preparing her frugal repast.

“Harcourt,” said the sweet girl, “I find, by what I can gather from these little chatterers, that they are the grandchildren of our good hostess. — Their mother lives near: shall we accompany them home? Surely there is something very interesting in these little innocents!”

I readily

THE ASSIGNATION. 105

I readily agreed to the proposal, and, with the old woman's permission, we followed our pretty guides.

We had not proceeded far, ere we reached a cottage, most romantically situated on the declivity of a hill. — You know, Rainsford, I have no hand at the picturesque; your lively imagination, therefore, must supply the deficiency.

The melodious warblings of the feathered songsters, the freshness of the air, the rural beauty of the



situation, inspired inconceivable delight ;

“ For nature, here, wanton'd as in her prime,

“ And play'd at will her virgin fancies,

“ Wild beyond rule or art.”

My Eliza was never more enchanting, never so tender ; and, in this sweet retreat, we exchanged mutual vows of everlasting love.

“ My Eliza,” said I, “ how  
“ delightful that arbour ! The

“ jasmine

THE ASSIGNATION. 107

“jasmine and honeysuckle seem am-  
“bitious to outvie each other, and  
“put on their gayest beauties to  
“attract yon roving butterfly.”

‘A pretty pastoral speech!—  
On my word, Harcourt, you want  
but a flock, and a sheep-hook, to  
be the prettiest Corydon in the  
country,’ “and the Sylvan pen of  
rural lovers, that every tree may  
record Eliza’s charms.”

By this time we had reached  
the harbour, and were entering it,

when Eliza started back, surprized at the appearance of a woman, who rose immediately and accosted us with a politeness which would have engaged our attention, had her situation been less interesting. “A faultless form, shaped by the hand of harmony,” an inexpressible elegance, rendered her infinitely attractive. — Our pretty friends ran to their delighted mother, who tenderly caressed them, and led us to her cottage. — It is impossible to describe the  
neatness



THE ASSIGNATION. 109

neatness of her habitation, or the simplicity of her dress.

Her rooms were hung with her own drawings, and furnished with her work: indeed every thing around her seemed to borrow propriety and grace from its lovely mistress.

Eliza related our accident, and I informed her of the happiness I expected.

She fixed her eyes upon me, and suddenly starting up, under pretence of looking out of the window,

## THE ASSIGNATION.

dow, endeavoured to conceal her emotion.

My Eliza followed her, begged to know the reason of her tears, assured this charming afflicted of her fondest friendship, and of the interest she took in her concerns.

The lovely mourner pressed my Eliza's hand.

"Ah, Miss Montfort, just such  
"was my amiable Fortescue!" —  
and changed the subject.

We staid with her some time,  
and, at parting, received an affectionate

## THE ASSIGNATION. 111

tionate invitation to receive our  
visit.

At our return to the cottage, we  
found the chaise waiting, and, after  
rewarding our hostess for the trou-  
ble we had given, set off for Beaufort  
Hall.

Lady Beverley and Lucy had been  
there long before us, and were  
alarmed at our delay.

We related our little adventure,  
but knew not what to think of  
our unknown daughter of a cot-  
tager, young, sensible and beautiful.  
— Her “ amiable Fortescue too ! ” —

Thy



## 112 THE ASSIGNATION.

Thy friend is all impatience to unravel this mystery.

The ladies propose staying here a few days ; and the morning after we arrive in Brook Street is to complete the happiness of your

EDMOND HARCOURT.

LET-

THE ASSIGNATION. 113

LETTER XXXVI.

From the same to the same.

*Dear Rainsford,*

**I**F you possess an equal share of curiosity with your friend, you will own yourself obliged to him for the earliest accounts of the fair cottager.

Eliza

## 114 THE ASSIGNATION.

Eliza went to see her last Thursday, but I was not permitted to be of the party.

Clarinda received her with the highest pleasure, thanked her for her generous friendship, which she acknowledged herself unable to return, but by disclosing her motives for this close retirement. She desired I might accompany her in the next visit, and she would relate her history; conscious that, though prudence might condemn, Mrs. Montfort and Colonel Harcourt, judging from  
their



## THE ASSIGNATION. 115

their own hearts, would approve her conduct. Eliza staid with her above an hour, and fixed the next morning for the recital.

We set out very early, and found the amiable Clarinda instructing her lovely children. She desired we would excuse her absence for a short time, as it was her invariable rule, to spend three hours, every morning, in the improvement of her little ones; a regulation which she resolved ne-  
ver

## 116 THE ASSIGNATION.

ver to infringe. In this charming spot it were impossible we should want amusement, every object conveyed pleasure, and we wandered for some time in the sweet Elysium.

In a covered walk, leading to the house, we met Clarinda, who came in search of us. She slightly apologized for her absence, and, after some indifferent conversation, we requested the performance of her promise. She blushed, but confessed she had no claim to our  
friendship

THE ASSIGNATION. 117

friendship till she had disclosed her secret ; and if we then thought her unworthy of it, she should have the satisfactory assurance, that she had not maintained our partiality by disguise.

We seated ourselves beneath a spreading oak, and the lovely Clarinda related her artless tale.

“ MY parents formerly possessed an estate, which, though it could not raise them to lux-

“ urious



## 118 THE ASSIGNATION.

“ urious affluence, afforded the  
“ gratification of every reasonable  
“ desire.

“ Naturally ambitious, they  
“ were not contented with their  
“ lot, and infinitely exceeded their  
“ income. One extravagance pre-  
“ pared them for another, and  
“ every repeated excess weakened  
“ resistance.

“ Convinced, at last, that a  
“ longer continuance in this fatal  
“ course, would entirely deprive  
“ them of subsistence, they collected  
“ the

THE ASSIGNATION. 119

“ the remains of their shattered  
“ fortune, and intended settling in  
“ some country village.

“ Chance directed them to this  
“ rural spot; it caught the youth-  
“ ful fancy, and, at my pressi-  
“ ing sollicitation, they bought the  
“ farm.

“ My father determined to de-  
“ vote his hours to husbandry,  
“ while my mother spent her  
“ time between household econo-  
“ my and her daughter's educa-  
“ tion.

“ I was then twelve years of  
“ age.

120 THE ASSIGNATION.

“ age. Every scene was new;  
“ and I rambled from field to  
“ field, as inclination directed;  
“ played with the bleating lamb,  
“ and thought my happiness un-  
“ bounded.

“ Four years passed in this de-  
“ lightful calm, when, returning  
“ home one evening later than  
“ usual, my father chid me for  
“ delay, and told me they had a  
“ young nobleman at the cottage,  
“ who had met with an unfor-  
“ tunate accident, and by a fall  
“ from his horse was rendered  
“ incapable



THE ASSIGNATION. 121

“incapable of pursuing his jour-  
“ney; adding, that he had sent  
“his servants to a neighbouring  
“village, as his moving might be  
“dangerous.

“My mother never left his  
“room; and I prepared every  
“medicine, and assisted her as  
“much as possible, without entering  
“the chamber.

“He recovered much sooner  
“than we expected, and in less  
“than a fortnight ventured down  
“stairs. It was then I first saw  
“him. — Ah! my friends, an

122 THE ASSIGNATION.

" emotion, till then unknown, in-  
" terested me in his fate, and  
" from that moment my life  
" seemed to depend on his re-  
" covery.

" He was surprised at my ap-  
" pearance; wondered such charms  
" were

---

" Born to blush unseen,

" And waste their sweetness on the desert air."

" My parents now resumed  
" their domestic cares, and we  
" were inseparable. He directed  
" my taste in drawing, read to

THE ASSIGNATION. 123

“me, and by his melodious voice

“and agreeable manner, every

“subject assumed fresh beauties.

“Our evening rambles were de-

“lightful, he vowed eternal friend-

“ship, and I was too artless to

“disguise the pleasure this af-

“furance gave me. Every field

“wore fresher verdure at his ap-

“proach, while every prospect

“discovered ten thousand charms,

“till then unknown.

“I gave myself up to these

“delightful sensations without re-



“ serve, nor blushed to own the  
 “ innocent partiality.

“ My friend rewarded my pa-  
 “ rents for their trouble, and  
 “ agreed for his board till his  
 “ health was perfectly re-esta-  
 “ blished. How unnecessary the  
 “ feint, while a blooming coun-  
 “ tenance contradicted his preten-  
 “ sions!

“ One evening my father con-  
 “ gratulated me on the conquest  
 “ of a neighbouring farmer’s son,  
 “ from whom he had just  
 “ received

THE ASSIGNATION. 125

“received proposals of marriage.

“The young man is amiable,” said he, “and my Clarinda, ever obedient to her parents, will not refuse compliance.

“My friend appeared embarrassed; he fixed his intelligent eyes upon my face, as if ambitious to discover every emotion of my heart.

“I begged my father to allow me a few hours for consideration, before I returned a decisive answer.

126. THE ASSIGNATION.

“The request, he said, was  
“reasonable; but, my dear girl,”  
continued he, “you are now of  
“an age to marry: your mother  
“and myself cannot live long,  
“and we wish to see you set-  
“tled.”

“I curtesied and withdrew,  
“flew to an arbour where I had  
“often listened to my friend’s  
“discourse, and gave vent to my  
“tears.”

“In my return to the house,  
“I met this amiable friend, his arms  
“folded,



THE ASSIGNATION. 127

“folded, and the perfect picture  
“of despair.

“My own sorrows vanished at  
“the sight, or gave place to a  
“concern for his apparent dis-  
“satisfaction. I ran to him, but  
“was unable to speak. He gazed  
“on me for some moments with  
“the most flattering tenderness,  
“then seizing my trembling hand,  
“he pressed it to his heart.

“My Clarinda,” said he, “how  
“cruel my situation! — and,  
“with a deep sigh, hurried from  
“me.

" I saw him not again that  
 " evening, and the next morning  
 " when we were all assembled at  
 " breakfast, I declared my aver-  
 " sion to the thoughts of marriage;  
 " begged my parents to indulge  
 " their daughter, and they should  
 " find her in all things else ever  
 " obedient to their will.

" My noble friend seemed re-  
 " joiced at the declaration, and  
 " the liveliest transport revelled in  
 " his eyes. — My father too  
 " kindly assured me he never  
 " would controul my inclinations;  
 " and

THE ASSIGNATION. 129

“ and happiness was again restored  
“ to our little circle.

“ Our rambles were more frequent than usual: we carried  
“ our books to the arbour, and I  
“ employed myself with my needle,  
“ while this tender friend ennobled my heart with examples of  
“ heroism, or softened it with tales  
“ of love, and each recital enforced  
“ conviction of our mutual sentiments.

“ But why, my friends, do I  
“ dwell with such pleasure on the  
“ avowal of a guilty passion? — Can

G 5 “ Colonel



" Colonel Harcourt, can Miss  
 " Montfort maintain a friendship  
 " for the unwedded woman who  
 " owns herself a mother, nor can  
 " complain of having been de-  
 " ceived?

" The Marquis, alarmed at his  
 " son's long absence, wrote to him  
 " at the villa; my friend had sent  
 " his servants there, with orders to  
 " bring his letters to our cottage.  
 " He immediately answered his  
 " father's letter, and gave an ac-  
 " count of his accident, with a  
 " promise of being soon in town.

" Un-

THE ASSIGNATION. 131

“ Unfortunately, the messenger he  
“ had sent, informed the Marquis  
“ of his son’s habitation, and gave  
“ a circumstantial description of the  
“ family.

“ A girl about seventeen, if  
“ beautiful as the man described  
“ her, must certainly have great in-  
“ fluence with his Fortescue. He  
“ trembled at the idea of a dispro-  
“ portionate marriage, and was  
“ alarmed for the cottager’s peace.

“ The Marquis ordered his  
“ chaise, and, conducted by this

132 THE ASSIGNATION.

“ faithless servant, arrived in the  
“ evening at our peaceful habita-  
“ tion.

“ We were at supper when he  
“ entered. — Judge, my friends, of  
“ our consternation.

“ He staid but a few minutes,  
“ and insisted on my lover’s ac-  
“ companying him to town.

“ It was in vain to refuse, we  
“ parted without the power of  
“ taking a fond farewell; and our  
“ eyes were the only vouchers of  
“ eternal constancy.

“ Every



THE ASSIGNATION. 133

“ Every post brought letters from  
“ my noble lover, which breathed  
“ the very soul of tenderness ; and,  
“ some months after, our affection  
“ was increased by the most en-  
“ dearing cement.”

Here the sweet girl shed a flood  
of tears, and fondly embraced her  
twin prattlers. The little innocents,  
wondering at their mother, jumped  
on her knee ; and, with the corner  
of their frocks, wiped off the pearly  
drops. Delighted with this artless  
testimony of their love,

“ Her face still combating with smiles and tears,”

she

134 THE ASSIGNATION.

she seated them on the grass, and thus resumed her narrative.

“ Soon after this, the Marquis  
“ died — and when I expected to  
“ see this tender lover at my feet,  
“ imagine, if you can, my sufferings  
“ at receiving the following letter.

“ HOW can I submit to give  
“ my sweet friend an account  
“ which, I am convinced, must  
“ sensibly affect her? O, my an-  
“ gel! my more than wife! sum-  
“ mon all your resolution. — Scorn,  
“ despise,

“despise, detest your pusillanimous  
 “lover — but grieve not that we  
 “meet no more. — The man, my  
 “love, who would willingly part  
 “with life to ensure your happi-  
 “ness, is himself reduced to wound  
 “it. — Could my Clarinda have  
 “beheld the Marquis on the bed  
 “of death, have seen the suppli-  
 “cating hand, or heard the pa-  
 “rental command, like her For-  
 “tescue, she must have sunk beneath  
 “the trial. — Her tender heart,  
 “formed in the same mould, awake  
 “to



136. THE ASSIGNATION.

“to the same pleasures, and sensible  
“of the same afflictions, must like his  
“have yielded, and by a fatal oath  
“have made a parent easy, at the  
“expence — my God! at the  
“expence of each, fair blooming  
“prospect of felicity. — My love,  
“we meet no more. — Farewell,  
“farewell, for ever. — Believe  
“thy Fortescue shares all thy sor-  
“rows — Ah, more than shares  
“them; he feels all thy grief. —  
“How are our dear little ones?  
“ — My angel, how difficult  
“to

THE ASSIGNATION. 137

“to conquer the lover and the  
“father! Each attempt, to break  
“the sweet connection, but strong-  
“er binds the tie. — I shall send  
“frequently for our children, and  
“in their sweet society, and open-  
“ing beauties, still see their lovely  
“mother, whose interest in this  
“heart, neither time, nor absence,  
“can efface, and who will be ever  
“dear to her constant.”

“FORTESCUE.”

“

“MY

"MY affliction was too poignant to be endured, and I was  
 "for some weeks confined to my  
 "bed. Maternal love still bound  
 "me to the world. My Forrescue's  
 "children were inconceivably dear  
 "to me, and I resolved to spare no  
 "expence in their education. This  
 "generous man has amply provided  
 "for us, and inclosed a deed of  
 "settlement for five hundred  
 "pounds a year. — I bought  
 "this little cottage, and for these  
 "fix years past can boast of perfect  
 "happiness.

YM "

" He



THE ASSIGNATION. 139

“He sends for the children frequently : and you cannot imagine the pleasure I take in preparing them for their visit, or my ambition to unfold the opening thought, and make some new improvement against the returning day : while my Fonescue, obliged by this cruel oath, neither to write to, or see me, delights to teach the little prattlers some pretty lesson, some soft message of eternal love, which, while they repeat, I press them in my arms,

140. THE ASSIGNATION.

—“arms, and snatch their father’s

—“kisses from their lips:”

—“Thus, my friends, we live,

—“we love at second hand: and if

—“our pleasures are not so tumultu-

—“ous, they are infinitely more de-

—“lightful than the transports of

—“successful love.”

—“Obliged by this cruel oath, neither

—“to write, or to see me, delights

—“to teach the little printers some

—“The sweet girl might have talked

—“for ever, we were not disposed to

—“interrupt her.”

—“She

She arose, and taking Eliza's hand, "Can you, Madam, still  
" think I deserve your friend-  
" ship?"

My angel embraced her, and assured her of her fond regard.

We pressed her to give us the pleasure of her company at H—, and I saw the proposal was not disagreeable to her—as she might make London in the way, and fix her children's tutors.

Now Rainsford, what think you

of



of our amiable cottager? The greatest part of the world would condemn her; but shall we accuse a failing which offers so soft an excuse?—I will not search too deeply. Clarinda is sensible, modest, polite; and if she fell, she doubtless erred from ignorance.

You are greatly obliged to me for this packet, since it has robbed me of so much time from the company of my dear Eliza. But her smiles shall efface the remembrance of the painful hour. — Rainsford, I

fly

THE ASSIGNATION. 143

fly to her, and to-morrow gives the  
charmer to the arms of your de-  
lighted

HARCOURT.

LETTER XXXVII.

Miss *Lucy Montfort*, to Miss *Charlotte*  
*Watson*.

I KNOW my dear Charlotte takes so large a part in all that concerns her friends, that my sister's happiness will give her the sincerest pleasure.

My last informed you, that fortune had for once reconciled love  
with



with honour, and was to lead them last Tuesday to the temple of Hymen, in the form of Edmond Harcourt.

The bride and bridegroom were in white for the day, the next was to see them reassume the sable garb, which custom has rendered necessary to respect.

I flattered myself with the pleasure of our society being agreeably encreased by Lord Charles Rainsford. Colonel Harcourt pressed him much for that purpose; but

the plea he urged was, indeed, too good a one to allow a renewed application. It would but have revived the remembrance of all his sorrows, in reminding him of the scene he so lately passed in joy and triumph with his Delia. His place, therefore, was supplied by an old acquaintance of my brother's; more elegant in person than Lord Charles, but of a mind less amiable. — Let me see if I can give you any idea of him.

The

## THE ASSIGNATION. 147

The well known Augustus Richmond then, is much above the common size : rather thin than otherwise, but astonishingly well formed. His face is long, his complexion extremely good, and his mouth and teeth beautiful to a degree. His nose aquiline; his eyes rather large, and of a dark hazle; a prodigious quantity of the finest auburn hair, which he is too fond of to disguise with powder in the country : add to all this, an easy elegance of manners; an animated expression in



148 THE ASSIGNATION.

his countenance ; lively wit in his conversation ; and you must own, that even the most consummate vanity must leave him a divinity.

Who can wonder that, left in possession of a large estate, just come from the university, and master of his actions, though not of his passions, Augustus Richmond should have “ followed the multitude to do “ evil ;” and, hurried away by the torrent of admiration and applause his personal attractions gained

gained him, should forget how much more solid were the satisfactions of a well regulated mind?

Thus, Charlotte, did those same personal attractions, which, by prejudicing all the world in his favour, would have rendered their love an easier acquisition, tend only to render him despised in the end; as they taught him to rest content with *admiration*, when nothing less than *adoration* would have been his due. The former, by its glitter, astonished the multitude; but the latter would have

150 THE ASSIGNATION.

rendered him dear only to the discerning few.

Talk to the thoughtless Richmond of his faults, and he will tell you,

“ Great wits, sometimes, may gloriously offend,

“ And rise to faults, true critics dare not mend;

“ From vulgar bounds, with brave disorder part,

“ And snatch a grace, beyond the reach of art.”

Talk to him of marriage, and he will swear he loves the whole sex so well he knows not which to select from it; and will not, for the



## THE ASSIGNATION. 151

the fake of particularizing one, offend the rest.

Talk to him of religion, and he will ask you if Cæsar and Alexander were Catholics; if Alfred, the Henrys, the Edwards, were Protestants; if the Duke of Marlborough was a Mahometan.

Such then is Augustus Richmond, and such, as a friend, nobody can be desirous of his acquaintance; but as a companion, as a visiter, every one must be charmed with him.

152 THE ASSIGNATION.

He was dressed (for dress is one of his accomplishments) the day of the wedding, in a coat almost white, with a light tint of salmon colour, frogs the same, lined with *serge de sois* of lead colour; the waistcoat and breeches of the same silk, worked with two chains of gold spangles thrown over each other, and some flowers of twist, the colour of the coat, ran carelessly over them. I assure you nothing could be more attractive than his appearance; except that nameless charm, that careless elegance, which

THE ASSIGNATION. 153

which renders Edmond Harcourt, wherever he appears, the most pleasing object. Lively before, his good fortune seems to have thrown down all bounds to his vivacity. My sister loves him, he doats upon her, and their happiness seems complete. Amidst all these joys, can I find time to sigh? Yes, my friend, the idea of Willmott would find entrance even into Paradise, and cast dejection there. Richmond, by his good humour, tries to keep up my spi-



154 THE ASSIGNATION.

rits; Harcourt swears my solemnity has checked many of his brightest ideas; Eliza endeavours to console me; Lady Harriet and the fair cottager pity me; and Lord Charles Rainsford is expected here soon. — Ah, Charlotte! — But they have sent for me to accompany them upon the water. We are to land at a delightful little summer-house, in a grove near which the feathered songsters are to find their sweetest notes, rivalled by the clarinets and French horns.

Adieu,

## THE ASSIGNATION. 135

Adieu, Charlotte. — Would, with  
that word, your Lucy could bid  
adieu to her melancholy ideas !

156 THE ASSIGNATION.

LETTER XXXVIII.

*Augustus Richmond, Esq; to Captain Bevill.*

AH! Frederick! (the first time  
I was ever guilty of an ejaculation in my life) this I owe to my confounded folly in joining the sober faces at Harcourt's wedding:  
but



THE ASSASSINATION. 157

but Ashby's cursed affair hung so much upon my mind, I was glad of an opportunity to give a new turn to my ideas, by entering upon a scene, new indeed to me.

You are going now, with a share of astonishment, to ask what strange adventure presented itself? What imagination can suggest an idea which has not been realized in the thoughtless round which has ever engaged the gay Richmond? Heigh-ho! Frederick (again an ejaculation) that *I* who have boldly stepped

158 THE ASSIGNATION.

stepped forth, the hero of adventure  
and intrigue, should

"Leave that name, at which the world grew

"pale,

"To point a moral, and adorn a tale;"

that I should, I say, be caught in  
those toils, in which I have made  
it my glory to involve thousands;  
and that

"My fall was destined to a barren strand,

is wonderful indeed. — But to com-  
mence historian.

Willing

## THE ASSIGNATION. 15

Willing to amuse myself in passing through a country with which I was before exceedingly pleased, I began my route through Burgundy. Frederick, if you was never in that delightful province, during their vintage, you have not yet visited the region where nature has been most profusely lavish of her favours. Happy Burgundians! since, in your peaceful vallies, content and plenty seem to flourish, as natives of the fruitful soil. Happy, that on your well cultivated hills, the labour of  
the



the husbandman, is less conspicuous than his enjoyments.

I was just contemplating these advantages, heightened by the beauties of the setting sun; when the postillion stopped to inform me that it was impossible to proceed to the town I intended, as one of the horses was unable to go above a mile farther. To reprehend the poor devil, would have been useless; and as I saw a cottage about two fields distant, I bent my steps thither; not doubting shelter for the night. Ah! Frederick, the most

on

in-

THE ASSIGNATION. 161

inclement skies had been less pernicious than the fair sun that now greeted my approach. Youth, beauty, wit, good-humour, and accomplishments, with all the nameless graces, to which the soul of man has ever yielded itself captive, were here fixed to prove, that Richmond had a heart to bestow, and that *that* heart was destined for the sweet Lavinia. It is evident they are English. I am not yet to learn, that birth cannot be disguised by obscurity, and that

merit,

162 THE ASSIGNATION.

merit, such as my Lavinia's, cannot be born the inhabitant of a cottage: but to whom that merit really owes its origin, I am ignorant. That I love her, and that my happiness depends on hers, is beyond a doubt: can I then long remain in uncertainty? No, Frederick; a post or two shall inform you of the success of my enquiries; and if her birth proves equal to what my fond imagination paints it, I shall be proud to raise her to that sphere of life her beauties



THE ASSIGNATION. 163

ties were designed to embellish —  
Adieu, Bevill: though strangely  
altered, yet my friendship for you  
can admit no change: still am I  
your

AUGUSTUS RICHMOND.

MY friend, Frederick, was  
not mistaken in his conjecture.  
Could he be so, when else  
gance was stamped on every word  
Lavinia uttered, and every graceful  
LET-

164 THE ASSIGNATION.

LETTER XXXIX.

*Augustus Richmond, Esq; to Captain Bevill.*

THY friend, Frederick, was not mistaken in his conjectures. Could he be so, when elegance was stamp'd on every word Lavinia uttered, and every graceful  
action

THE ASSIGNATION. 165

action declared her noble birth? —

My sweet girl then is of a Scotch family, and the daughter of Lord

——, who died a rebel to his king and country. — His estate

was confiscated, and his widow and child, with a narrow income, retired to grace a cottage. —

Here, Frederick, they might have lived unknown, and buried in obscurity that beauty, and those accomplishments, which could have taught the haughtiest monarch to abdicate his throne, and own

Lavinia's



166 THE ASSIGNATION.

Lavinia's smile o'erpaid the loss  
of empire. But your friend's good  
genius conducted him hither.  
Prithce, Bevill, seek out thy kin-  
dred mind; for, however we may  
boast of our insensibility, and glory  
in indifference, believe thy Rich-  
mond, the Stoic never yet was  
blest. "Joy flies monopolists;"  
and in the soil of virtuous love,  
felicity delights to blossom.

"Bless me!" you cry,

"Is this the gallant, gay Augustus,

"That dear perfidious?"

Upon

THE ASSIGNATION. 167

Upon my soul, Lavinia, nothing but charms like thine could work the reformation. Prithee, Bevill, be not malicious; declare my fair one is a Hebe, some perfect divinity, that, charmed by the all-attractive Richmond, flies to Venus, and borrows the powerful Cestus: swear too, he made a stout resistance, till at length, fatigued with indisputed sway, this conquering Jupiter suffered himself in turn to be subdued.

You

168 THE ASSIGNATION.

You desire me to exert my skill in painting, and send you a portrait of those charms, matchless indeed, if they could touch your Richmond's heart. Now dost thou really imagine the transported, impetuous Augustus, though with eyes constantly rivetted on that blooming countenance, can paint one charming feature? — But absolutely, Bevill, thy request had been very pretty, and very much in character from a Zeno, or a Methusalah. Pray, my good sober friend, how many hundred years has



THE ASSIGNATION. 169

has the idol of your heart basked  
in the smiles of felicity?

In a few weeks I hope to be  
supremely happy; shall bring my  
fair partner to London; and, with  
such an excuse, fear not your  
raillery. As your friend has al-  
ways been distinguished for gaiety,  
for wit, and for pleasure, so, in future  
times, when men of fashion shall  
no longer blush at conjugal fide-  
lity, and wish to select the fond,  
the affectionate, the happy husband,  
they will point to

AUGUSTUS RICHMOND.

VOL. II.

I

LET-

170 THE ASSIGNATION.

LETTER XL.

Captain *Bevill* to Lady *Asbby*.

IT is with pleasure I inform your  
Ladyship, that our tour has  
been even of more service to the  
amiable Sir George, than we could  
have expected — his illness in  
Italy

THE ASSIGNATION. 171

Italy (which, knowing the excess of Lady Ashby's maternal love, I did not dare sooner to disclose) though violent, while it lasted, seems to have in some measure restored tranquility to his mind.

In the height of his fever, he raved incessantly of his Emilia, and now frequently mentions her; but he talks of her, as of a pure angelic spirit, or Being of celestial race.

I have endeavoured to engage him in some slight attachment,



some pleasing frolic, which too light to sink into the heart, might rouse its dormant feelings: but the attempt is vain. Shew him a fine woman, she but reminds him of Emilia: carry him into the society of wits, of *belles esprit*, and he discovers some faint traces of his Emilia: lead him to the more attractive fair ones, where wit is tempered with discretion, and beauty heightened by modesty; where softness is refined by sentiment, and vivacity endeared by sensibility —

it

THE ASSIGNATION. 173

it is there his Emilia shines.

He delights in solitary rambles,  
in which I am his only companion.  
He plucks the freshest rose-buds,  
and says, "My Bevill, they boast  
the blooming beauties of Emilia —  
as bright, almost as transient."

Thus, Madam, Sir George Ashby  
sometimes gives vent to his me-  
lancholy: but in his gayer hours,  
he talks with pleasure of returning  
to London, of seeing your Lady-  
ship, and revisiting his old affo-  
ciates; but Lady Harriet seems

banished from his remembrance.

In one of our excursions I ventured to mention her, and hinted how much you wished the alliance.

“ Ah, Frederick,” said he,  
 “ would I could oblige Lady Ash-  
 “ by !” But still doating on Emilia--  
 “ How poor a present were this  
 “ hand ! My heart is fixed on her ;  
 “ she is my sweet companion ; and  
 “ imagination shews some emblem  
 “ of her lovely form in every plea-  
 “ sing



THE ASSIGNATION. 175

“sing object. — Thy friend, my  
“Bevill, must either retain his  
“hopeless passion, or once freed,  
“can never prove again the fading  
“pleasure.”

I fear, Madam, we must give  
up our flattering hopes. He seems  
averse to marriage: his Emilia  
was formed by nature to enchant,  
and time alone can dissipate his  
woes.

Sir George Ashby is the uni-  
versal favourite in every place he  
visits. The young nobility are

all assiduous to cultivate his friendship; but he politely rejects their offers. — The ladies too are charmed with the amiable Englishman; and try every female art to attract attention. They accuse him of insensibility. “ So young — so handsome — so indifferent !” But my friend passes unwounded their smiles and pointed glances.

We shall be with you soon after this letter. To restore Sir George Ashby to his friends, with recovered  
 serenity,

THE ASSIGNATION. 177

ferenity, will be the highest pride  
of your Ladyship's

Most obedient,

FREDERICK BEVILL.



178 THE ASSIGNATION.

LETTER XLI.

*Miss Lucy Montfort, to Miss Charlotte  
Watson.*

**M**Y dear Miss Watson, instruct your friend — teach her to refuse these pressing solicitations. — Lady Harriet, Clarinda, even Harcourt and his Eliza combine

THE ASSIGNATION. 179

combine against me, and are warm in Lord Charles Rainsford's praises. — I own with them his Lordship amiable; his mind humane; while the tenderest affection dwells in his heart, and points to social happiness.

Cut off from joy in the full blossom of his expectations, I have learnt to pity him — But, Ah, Charlotte; can your Lucy love again? — Yet so they have decreed it. — Why, my friend, may I not prove the single state,

which, though not highly blest,  
is yet exempt from misery, knows  
not the anguish of contempt, the  
torments of neglected love?

Since my last, our little coterie  
has been agreeably encreased.  
How shall I introduce our new  
acquaintance, any otherwise than  
by informing you, that the Mar-  
quis of —, an admirer of Lady  
Harriet Somners, called at H—,  
in the way to his seat, to see her  
Ladyship?

We were all assembled in the  
library,



THE ASSIGNATION. 181

library, and Richmond entertaining us with infinite pleasantries, when our fair cottager came running to us, with a nest of wood-pigeons she had brought from a neighbouring grove.

She started on entering the room, and the birds fell from her trembling hand.

The Marquis ran to her, and threw himself at her feet.

“ My Clarinda !” — “ My  
“ Fortescue !” — was all they  
could distinctly utter ; and he sustained

182 THE ASSIGNATION.

tained the almost lifeless beauty in his arms.

Our attention was drawn from the lovers by Lady Harriet, who rose with majestic loveliness; and,

“Supremely happy in th’awakened power,

“Of giving joy,”

went up to the astonished Marquis.

“My friend,” said she, “you  
“have often assured me this  
“hand is at my disposal: now  
“evince

THE ASSIGNATION. 183

“ evince the sincerity of your pro-  
“ fessions. I give it to Clarinda,  
“ and be assured that providence,  
“ by this heaven-directed meeting,  
“ has destined you for each other,  
“ and cancels the guilty oath.”

She took Clarinda's hand, and putting it into the amiable Fortescue's — “ My friends,” added she, “ give me the satisfaction  
“ of hearing your lips confirm my  
“ wishes.”

The Marquis gazed on Lady Harriet with the most grateful admiration,



184 THE ASSIGNATION.

miration, and once more throwing himself on his knees, vowed to make the fair cottager his wife.

We took the earliest opportunity of leaving the room, and it being a charming morning, we wandered in the wood till joined by Fortescue, Clarinda and the children. The delighted parents seemed to vie with each other in caressing their little innocents.

Clarinda had informed the Marquis of our first acquaintance; and  
he

## THE ASSIGNATION. 185

he was lavish in acknowledging his obligations for our friendship. —

Harcourt insisted on his remaining with us; and the day following was to confirm their union.

Lord Charles Rainsford comes. He requests a few minutes conversation. — Ah, my prophetic heart!

In

186 THE ASSIGNATION.

In Continuation.

MY God! to be mistress of the world, I would not prove again the mournful interview.

He accosted me with an air of tenderness — of expectation — an air which seemed to say, “ My  
“ Lucy, make me happy — yet  
“ think not I forget the lovely  
“ Delia.”

He



## THE ASSIGNATION. 187

He pressed me to make a double wedding.

Ah, Charlotte ! how much like Willmott's his melodious accents !

My heart, already softened by the dear recollection of those tender vows (alas ! too fond for permanence) ; could I do otherwise than weep ?

Rainsford caught me in his arms, and kissed off the flowing tears.

“ My Lucy, what means this

“ con-

188 THE ASSIGNATION.

“concern? Ah, how amiable this  
“tender weakness! ——— Your  
“lover, my angel, respects your  
“sorrows, and had rather for-  
“feit happiness than recall the sad  
“remembrance.”

I disengaged myself from  
him.

“Leave me, my Lord —”

The rising sigh prevented ut-  
terance; and I could say no  
more.

He obeyed; but

“Gazed, as he slowly withdrew.”

Soon

## THE ASSIGNATION. 189

Soon after he was gone, I took up the pen I had lately employed in writing to my Charlotte, and sent the following billet:

“ I blush that Lord Charles  
“ Rainsford has been the witness  
“ of his Lucy’s weakness, and  
“ discovered how little consistent  
“ her love and reason. — Ah, my  
“ friend! — The subject — Your  
“ elegant expressions — and a  
“ thousand nameless charms, re-  
“ called the once loved Willmott.

“ If



190 THE ASSIGNATION.

“ If this ill-placed tenderness has  
“ sunk me below your notice,  
“ my Lord, this heart does not  
“ easily receive, nor can it lightly  
“ eradicate impressions: but if you  
“ still love me, I am yours. —  
“ I could wish the ceremony post-  
“ poned for a few weeks. — Will  
“ you, my amiable friend, in this  
“ request oblige your

“ LUCY?”

I re-

## THE ASSIGNATION. 191

I received an answer, filled with the warmest gratitude, and vows of eternal love. He will with pleasure wait my time, but flatters himself his Lucy will make allowance for a lover's impatience. My friends appear delighted with, as they kindly term it, my obliging compliance.

Lady Harriet leaves us immediately after Clarinda's marriage, as she imagines her presence may check Fortescue's joy. She goes to London; but has promised to give us her company at my nuptials. -- Ah, Charlotte, with what different emotions

192 THE ASSIGNATION.

tions do I look forwards to that time! How can I dispel ideas I have so long entertained; how forget my Willmott? Yet, Rainsford, I scorn to be unjust. This is the last time my pen shall mention Henry; nor shall you receive the hand till you wholly possess the heart of

LUCY MONTFORT.

L E T-



THE ASSIGNATION. 193

LETTER XLII.

*Sir George Ashby to Captain Bevill.*

**L**ISTEN with astonishment,  
Bevill, to the narration of an  
accident which will perhaps con-  
stitute the future felicity of your  
friend.

VOL. II.

K

I was

I was indulging my melancholy, on one of the finest mornings you ever beheld, in a retired part of Kenfington Gardens, when raising my eyes (which had for some time been bent upon the ground) at the sound of footsteps, I saw Lady Harriet, the once loved Harriet, gazing at me with a look of the most tender concern. — With an involuntary emotion I seized her hand, and pressing it between mine — “ Ah, Lady Harriet,” said I, “ is it possible you can be—  
“ hold

## THE ASSIGNATION. 195

“hold the faithless Ashby without  
“ detestation?”

Surprized at my address, she  
fainted in my arms.

Accusing myself for my indiscre-  
tion, I looked wildly round for  
help, and perceiving Lady Harriet's  
woman, who was attending her at  
a little distance, I gave her my hat  
and bid her run with it to the near-  
est water: in the mean time I kissed  
those beauteous lips a hundred  
times, which had so often confessed  
they loved me --- those dear eyes,



which owned they loved me still.

The water succeeded as I expected; but endeavouring by averting her face to conceal her blushes — “ Ah, Sir George,” said she, “ why this needless concern, this “ cruel caution, to restore me to “ an existence which I had lost “ with pleasure in your arms ?”

Apprehensive she had said too much, she disengaged herself from my embrace, and taking hold of her

THE ASSIGNATION. 197

her maid, curtesied, and was retiring.

“Hold,” said I, “my dearest Harriet; is it so lately I have found you, and will you punish me with the loss of your company?”

I then entreated to escort her home, to which she consented, and ordering her coach to drive slowly, we walked by the side of the rail, through Hyde-Park. Her spirits seemed to gain additional strength, and she made no use of her carriage. We parted at her door, after I had

198 THE ASSIGNATION.

gained her permission to attend her in the evening.

I flew to her before the usual hour of visiting, and found her dressed most elegantly. Never did she appear so lovely.

I entered upon the subject of my inconstancy. She kindly stopped me; and, in pity for my poor Emilia, seemed to forget my crime. Charmed with her goodness, I entreated her permission to devote the rest of my life to a return for it. — She generously accepted this divided heart; and, oh Bevill, since  
the



THE ASSIGNATION. 199

the fatal assignation, never has a gleam of joy found entrance in my breast till now.—— A few days will, I hope, entirely restore that peace to Lady Harriet, that bliss to me, which have so long been strangers to us both; and love will bring me to the altar, where justice has long demanded my appearance. Time, by banishing Emilia from my remembrance, will strengthen Lady Harriet in my heart.

Adieu, Bevill. May you in mis-

—T H I

K 4

fortune

200 THE ASSIGNATION.

fortune ever find as firm a friend, in  
love as faithful a mistress, as have  
been found in you and Lady  
Harriet, to bless your

ASHBY.

LET-

LETTER XLIII.

Miss *Lennox* to Mrs. *Lennox*,

Congratulate me, my dear mother, that the day is passed which has given to my amiable friend that husband whose worthy soul seemed formed to constitute her happiness. Peace and festivity reign throughout this house; and

K 5

never



202 THE ASSIGNATION.

never before did any little society  
seem so sincerely to experience

“The soul’s calm sunshine, and the heart-felt  
“joy.”

That society consists of the  
amiable Sir George and his lovely  
bride; Colonel Harcourt; the most  
agreeable, lively, elegant, careless  
creature in the world; his wife,  
and her sister; Captain Bevill, Mr.  
Barton, and your humble servant.

To-morrow we are to set off for  
Sir George Ashby’s country seat,  
where

THE ASSIGNATION. 203

where Lord Charles Rainsford, an admirer of Miss Montfort, is to join the party.

To be sure you expect from the pen of a female, the dress of the bride and bridegroom.

Sir George, then, had chosen a coat of the most beautiful pearl colour, lined with a white corded tabby; the waistcoat and breeches of the same silk, worked in bunches of flowers the colour of the coat, tied with knots of silver spangles.

Lady Harriet's negligee was white

204 THE ASSIGNATION.

lustring, the flounces of Turkey gauze, on which were embroidered the most delightful moss roses, tied with a ribbon of silver spangles like Sir George Ashby's waistcoat, which was her work. A short apron, and the trimming of her chip hat, were done in the same manner. Her ear-rings were small tops of exceeding fine brilliants; and from a diamond bow, in the middle of a narrow velvet collar, hung a long chain of diamonds, at the bottom of which was her Ashby's picture, carelessly



THE ASSIGNATION. 205

carelessly fastened with the ends of  
a small blond terefa, under a sprig  
of flowering myrtle.

"Such their attire; but oh! no pen can trace,

"No words can shew the beauties of each face;

"So kind! so winning! so divinely fair!

"Eternal youth and pleasure flourish there;

"There all the little loves and graces meet,

"And ev'ry thing that's soft, and ev'ry thing

"that's sweet."

Do, my dear mother, persuade  
Mrs. Wilson to come and stay  
with you; for, absolutely, this  
society

206 THE ASSIGNATION.

society is so bewitching I cannot find in my heart to leave it — or at least, if I do leave it, I believe that said heart of mine will take the liberty of staying behind me.

Mr. Barton is so agreeable, I should really fall in love with him if it was not for Colonel Harcourt: and Colonel Harcourt is so witty he would steal one's affections, if any body could do it in Mr. Barton's presence. — Though to think of the poor Emilia

Emilia Lesley were an antidote to love, since the tomb, not the temple of Hymen, followed the loss of her heart. — Poor Emilia! though dead to the world, the idea of thee will be ever cherished by the inhabitants of this mansion; and to possess a place in their remembrance and esteem, is to enjoy a triumph far superior to the common lot of happiness. — I would have died as Emilia to have been wept like her.

From so melancholy a subject as this, it were sacrilege to let my  
pen



## 208 THE ASSIGNATION.

pen return again to characterize the jovial throng. — Yes, my dear mother, in the midst of festivity, the tear of pity has its charms, and cannot fail of adding to the thankfulness we owe that divine Being

“ Who, with an eye of pity, views distress,

“ And thro’ his wisdom only ---- fails to bless.”



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